

Attendees

AC	Ana Christie	Sussex Chamber of Commerce	KF	Cllr Kim Forward	Hastings BC
AE	Alan Elder	EBS Consulting	KG	Cllr Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
AR	Alex Riley	South East LEP	MA	Marwa Al-Qadi	East Sussex CC
BH	Ben Hook	Rother DC	ME	Martin Ellis	Recruitment South East
BS	Cllr Bob Standley	Wealden DC	MS	Martin Searle	FSB
CB	Cllr Christine Bayliss	Rother DC	PJ	Philip Johnson	Locate East Sussex
CE	Christina Ewbank	ACES	PSm	Penny Shimmin	Sussex CDA
CS	Clive Soper	FSB	PSp	Peter Sharp	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC
DE	Dave Evans	East Sussex CC	RD	Richard Dawson	East Sussex CC
DSp	David Sheppard	D-RisQ Ltd	RM	Rhiannon Mort	South East LEP
DSy	Dan Shelley	East Sussex College Group	RS	Cllr Rupert Simmons	East Sussex CC
GP	Graham Peters (CHAIR)	ES Rural Partnership	SD	Stewart Drew	De La Warr Pavilion
IF	Ian Fitzpatrick	Lewes DC / Eastbourne BC	SH	Cllr Stephen Holt	Eastbourne BC
IG	Isabel Garden	Wealden DC	TL	Tony Leonard	Rother DC
JHa	James Harris	East Sussex CC	VC	Victoria Conheady	Hastings BC
JHv	Jo Havers	University of Brighton	ZN	Cllr Zoe Nicholson	Lewes DC

Apologies

DT	Cllr David Tutt	Eastbourne BC	SB	Sue Baxter	University of Sussex
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All of the papers and any presentations delivered at the meeting can be viewed on the following page of the ESCC website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/business/eastsussex/selep/tesminutes/tes200519

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. **GP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the apologies. **GP** asked the group for any specific conflicts of interest with today's agenda items and for any additional interests not already held on record; no additional interests were declared.

2. Review of previous minutes (4 May 2020)

- 2.1. There were no actions from the previous TES meeting. The minutes were approved by the group as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan

- 3.1. **AE** provided an update on the progress made since the last TES meeting. The first phase of the work was to set the overall context; this has now been completed and the Context Report has been shared. It's a dynamic report that will be continually updated as the circumstances continue to evolve.
- 3.2. Phase two, partner engagement, has involved interviews with more than 70 local stakeholders. A report has been drafted, and a short summary of the opportunities for East Sussex, along with outline ambitions for how to achieve them, has been shared with TES. The full report is being finalised and will be circulated at the end of next week (w/c 25 May).
- 3.3. The third phase is to draft an Action Plan, which will initially cover the headline actions to be supported and then needs to go further to include details on who will lead the items and the timescales (short/medium/long to cover the next 12-18 months). It is anticipated that feedback on the Phase 2 report and the initial headline Action Plan will need to be returned by the end of Mon 1 Jun, so the turnaround time will be very tight. The initial headline Action Plan will then be discussed at the next TES meeting on 8 Jun 2020.
- 3.4. TES discussed the above at length; *a summary of the key comments is given in Appendix 1.*
- 3.5. **GP** requested that any additional comments should be fed back to **AE** directly in the coming days, and by the end of the week at the latest, so they can be considered when drafting the Action Plan.

[Action: TES members to provide AE with any further comments on the Economy Recovery Plan by the end of this week]

4. SELEP update

- 4.1. **AR** and **RM** provided a very brief update on current SELEP activity. The government has decided to provide LEPs with only two-thirds of their Local Growth Fund (LGF) allocation for the 2020/21 financial year, and 'hold back' the final third for a (so far undetermined) period of time. This phasing of payments will obviously cause uncertainty for all LEPs, and the LEP Network is pushing back strongly. SELEP will now need to maximise its LGF spend as much as it can in order to make the best case for having all of the funding released as soon as possible. This will be discussed at the next SELEP Board meeting on 12 Jun 2020.
- 4.2. Options for using recycled Growing Places Fund (GPF) monies are being considered. Approximately £22m is available in the pot, and so a hybrid approach – using some of the funds for Covid-19 recovery and some for GPF Round 3 schemes – is still the favoured approach. All of the options will be presented to the SELEP Board on 12 Jun 2020 for consideration.
- 4.3. The Growth Hub continues to provide business support, with wider business support meetings taking place weekly. A new survey focussing on recovery has just been released, available via the [SELEP website](#).
- 4.4. An informal roundtable meeting for SELEP Board members will take place this Friday. It's an opportunity to inform and update the Board, particularly new Board members, on key areas of work. Topics will include the updated Risk Register in light of the impact of Covid-19, the wider Growth Hub business support programme and what businesses are reporting, LGF and the approach to the capital programme in 2020/21, and the positioning of Southern LEPs more strongly with the government.

5. Round table issues & responses / AOB

- 5.1. **AC** advised that the East Sussex Resilience Forum is now looking at 'restart' from a business perspective.
- 5.2. **CB** noted that colleagues in Rother are conducting 'listening' phone calls with local businesses this week; the feedback will be shared with **AE**.
- 5.3. **BS** advised that work on the Wealden Local Plan is still pushing ahead.
- 5.4. **DSp** confirmed that the initial avalanche of Growth Hub enquiries has quietened down. Potential providers for the new SEBB-2 programme are currently being assessed.
- 5.5. **CS** advised that the FSB has just completed a survey which features a lot of detail on the south east, and which he'll pass onto **AE**.
- 5.6. **PSm** commented that a survey of unemployed working-age adults has showed a significant 'lack of internet access', which needs addressing.
- 5.7. **DSy** advised that East Sussex College is delivering online to its 5,000 learners, and after half term they'll deliver to year 11 too. ESCG is also a member of the Sussex Learning Network who are doing work on tracking years 11 and 13 to help plan future provision.

[Summary of actions](#)

- 3.5 **TES** members to provide **AE** with any further comments on the Economy Recovery Plan by the end of this week.

Appendix 1 – TES comments on the Economy Recovery Plan work to date

- The ambitions are not listed in any priority order as the intention is to move forward with all of the actions listed in the Action Plan. However, *pace* is definitely important.
- We should consider whether the proposals are truly *ambitious* enough in setting out our aspirations. However, note also that the Action Plan will need to set out the particulars of resources and how to access them, as well as the overall plans, so cannot be a ‘wish list’.
- The use of planning powers is referenced, but the key here is allowing short-term flexibility in planning, i.e. taking a proactive approach that’s fast and adaptable. Such flexibility is vital as the market is moving fast and circumstances are still changing.
- Planning for the High Street in particular needs to be more agile and innovative, e.g. allowing increased trading in the street through licensing, temporary road closures, introducing temporary cycle routes, expanding pedestrian areas, relaxing the use of pavement space outside cafes/restaurants, withdrawing licence fees altogether until businesses using open spaces have recovered, lifting parking restrictions and fees. All of these could make an immediate difference and also make it attractive to ‘shop local’ (reducing leakage from the economy). There are obvious barriers – regulations apply, risk assessments need to be completed etc – but it’s important that we *try* it and see if it works.
- Many of the proposals listed in the summary report are existing long-term ambitions; what can we do *immediately* as some small businesses may not be around to see some of these ambitions realised.
- Digital connectivity must be a key consideration but note that we’ve already managed to achieve 97% coverage for Superfast Broadband in the county, and we’re continuing to aim towards 100%. Also note, TES colleagues first raised the matter of 4G/5G some years ago and advocated pursuing it at LEP level, but it progressed no further with SELEP colleagues. Now is the time to push it strongly.
- A focus on inward investment is necessary, particularly from those we may not have attracted before such as London businesses, but we need to focus on the right type of space and the supply of suitable premises, e.g. coworking space is in short supply.
- Clearly we need to restart and promote the tourist/visitor economy, particularly for our vulnerable coastal communities, but we need to think about *quality* rather than quantity if it’s to be sustainable. Image/perception is vital in this regard. We must also consider attracting visitors that are also businesses who may want to invest. Sussex Modern, 1066 and SDNP are ideal vehicles to attract visitors.
- In regard to low carbon, what about hydrogen buses and vehicles?
- In terms of anticipating unemployment, we’ve mentioned various sectors but what about the *people*; it seems likely that the 20-35-year-old bracket will be hit hard (large student debt, zero hours and temporary contracts, creatives, high-skilled graduates etc) so this should be explored further. By extension, we should reflect on the impact on *communities* as well as on people.
- The impact on vulnerable people needs to be considered. Reference should be made to social impact and inclusive growth.
- We can’t understate the huge impact on the local economy. Gatwick has previously been mentioned (the significant knock-on effect to our county, to be compounded by even more redundancies when the furlough scheme comes to an end), but this hasn’t really been captured in the context report.
- Companies and individuals are developing apps/sites to compete *locally* with the larger delivery/distribution firms, thus reducing leakage from the economy. It would be useful to look at some of these to see if there’s any way we can support them.
- The context report makes little reference to the EU impact (foreign students in Hastings, the EU wholesale market for fishers), so this area should be expanded.
- The Action Plan will need to continue evolving over time as we don’t know how things will develop, e.g. a second wave or the impact of Brexit.